

## **Setting Up a Temporary Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and Electronics Collection Site**

### ***Information for Community Officials***

Homeowners repairing or recovering possessions from their homes after a disaster may find household products used to care for home and property that are damaged and unusable. Electronics and mercury containing devices may also be unusable. To prevent health and environmental risks, household materials that would be considered hazardous must be disposed of properly. To best handle this, communities should consider setting up a temporary household hazardous waste (HHW) and electronics collection site to collect these damaged and unusable products. Remember that just because a closed container has been exposed to flood water does not mean it is unusable and needs to be disposed. **As long as they still have a label or the contents are known, most containers can be cleaned, relabeled and used.**

**Getting started:** The first thing you need to decide is whether the site will be a one-day or multiple-day drop-off collection site. Next you will need to decide what you will accept at the site.

The easiest way to handle a temporary collection site is to contract with a hazardous waste contractor. If you decide to operate a collection site yourself, the North Dakota Department of Health has drafted this guideline to assist you in setting up a temporary collection site. You will still need to coordinate with a hazardous waste contractor for the disposal of the collected waste.

**Storage and staging site:** A secure city- or county-owned building should be surrounded by an impervious containment area in case of spills, should be large enough to accept and store quantities of waste, should be easily accessible, should be easy to enter and exit, should be near transportation arteries and should be ready to use as a staging area without extensive site modifications.

**Site set up:** The following things will be needed to set up the site: tables and other working surfaces to accept and sort materials; heavy-mil plastic sheeting to place under and over work areas; duct tape for taping plastic to tables, etc.; boxes lined with plastic for the segregation and collection of waste; plastic bags, plastic containers and boxes to contain any damaged containers; non-biodegradable absorbents, such as cat litter or a commercial product for cleaning up minor spills; paper, pens and markers for signs, labels and record keeping; containers for non-hazardous solid waste and recyclable materials (empty cans and cardboard boxes); and personal protection equipment for each worker (goggles, disposable aprons, impervious gloves, lab coats or overalls). Staff should be trained on safety issues and the proper handling of collected materials. Signs, traffic cones and safety vests should be used for directing traffic. Other items that should be available include fire control equipment (fire extinguishers, water connection, soil) and first aid kits.

**Operation of site:** Residents should deliver material directly to the collection site. The site should be staffed to receive and segregate the waste during open hours. The site should be locked after hours to prevent dumping of unwanted materials. The site should be organized to facilitate traffic flow and/or parking by citizens, while also separating equipment operation from pedestrian traffic as much as possible. Containers of collected material should be labeled and operating costs should be tracked in

accordance with FEMA requirements in the event that cost reimbursement is pursued with FEMA. (See [www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/policy.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/policy.shtm) for FEMA Public Assistance information.)

**Segregation of waste:** Each of the following types of waste should be collected, segregated and packaged according to each group. Look for labels on the products to assist you in the proper segregation and packaging of the waste.

- Paint, solvents and other related materials: Empty paint cans can be recycled so they should be placed in containers set aside for recyclables. Paint cans containing dried paint can be sent to a permitted municipal solid waste landfill for disposal. Latex should be segregated from the oil-based paints. Stains, varnishes and paint solvents can be placed in the same container as the oil-based paints.
- Aerosol cans and flammable gas: Aerosol cans containing paint, lacquer, lubricant, aerosol poison and oven cleaners should be packaged loosely into their own container. These cans will have a flammable, non-flammable, corrosive or poison label on them.
- Lead acid batteries: Non-leaking lead acid batteries can be placed on a pallet or placed in a box. Protect the batteries against short circuiting by arranging the batteries so that the terminals will not touch other terminals. Leaking lead acid batteries should be packed into a plastic tote so as to collect any leaked acid.
- Used oil, fuels, transmission and brake fluids: Make arrangements with a service station or other established used oil and fuel collection point for residents to take used oil, transmission fluid and brake fluid for disposal. Otherwise, you can bulk used oil into 30- or 50-gallon metal or poly containers.
- Antifreeze: Bulk waste antifreeze into 30- or 50-gallon metal or poly containers.
- Acids: Acid based products (will have a corrosive label) can be packaged together. Examples of acid materials are Navel Jelly, varnish remover, Mister Plumber, Zud, Iron-Out, Saniflush and Muriatic Acid. **Do not mix acids with bases (see below)!**
- Bases: Basic products (will also have a corrosive label) need to be separated from the acids above. Examples of bases are 409, Drano, Mr. Clean, Spic n' Span, lye, wax strippers, floor strippers and sodium hydroxide. **Do not mix acids with bases!**
- Poisons and pesticides: These products will have a poison label on them and should be packaged together. Examples of poison materials are ant traps, fertilizers, rodent bait, herbicides, insect spray, weed killers and pesticides.
- Electronics and Mercury Devices: These materials contain lead and/or mercury and should be handled carefully to avoid breakage. Electronics include televisions, computers and computer monitors, etc. Mercury devices include thermometers, thermostats and fluorescent lighting and should be kept intact and separate.
- Unknowns: If the homeowner does not know what the product is, don't take it.

If you have any questions or need assistance with setting up a collection site, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.5166 or visit [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).